



Weight Management Medicine Options

This booklet is designed to help you compare your options for weight management medicine.

Who is a good candidate for weight management medicine?

If you are participating in a lifestyle change program (such as the **MOVE!** Weight Management Program for Veterans) but are not meeting your weight loss goal:

- And if you have a body-mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater

—OR—

- If your BMI is 27 or greater and you have one or more health problems (examples: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, or osteoarthritis)

Will I need other forms of treatment to help me lose weight?

Yes, you will also need to take part in a lifestyle change program (such as the **MOVE!** Program) that includes diet, physical activity, and behavioral counseling.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
PBM Academic Detailing Service

Phentermine / Topiramate (Qsymia®)

What does this medicine do?

It is a combination of two well-known medicines. At low doses, they work very well together to help people lose weight along with diet and exercise. It helps you think less about food and may make it feel less rewarding to eat food.

How much weight can I expect to lose on this medicine?

- **You should lose 1 to 2 pounds a week** if you follow the recommended diet and exercise plan while taking this medicine. In the first 2 weeks, you may lose more weight.
- **After 3 months, weight loss should be about 3 to 5% of your starting weight.** For example, if you weigh 250 pounds when you start the medicine, weight loss should be 8 to 12 pounds in 3 months.
- If you are not losing weight, talk with your healthcare team. The dose may be changed or the medicine may be stopped.

How do I take this medicine?

The starting dose is one capsule taken by mouth each morning. Your provider may increase the dose after 14 days. It is important that you follow the medicine instructions. The medicine does not have to be taken with food.

Possible side effects include:

- Dry mouth
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling nervous
- Dizziness
- Feeling sad
- Tingling or light touching feelings around mouth or face
- Constipation
- Headache

Less common but serious side effects:

- Confusion
- Signs of an allergic reaction (examples: rash, itching, trouble breathing)
- Fast breathing
- Muscle pain, cramps, or weakness
- Fast heartbeat
- Feeling very tired or weak

All medicines can have side effects, although not everyone will have side effects. Talk with your healthcare team if you notice any side effects that you think may be related to this medicine.

Your healthcare team will monitor the following:

- Weight
- Mood
- **MOVE!** Program or similar program (at least 1 visit per month)
- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- Pregnancy test if you are a female of reproductive age

As with all medicines in this booklet, ask your healthcare team if you have questions or would like to learn more.

Naltrexone / Bupropion ER (Contrave®)

What does this medicine do?

This medicine is a combination of two well-known medicines that work together to help you lose weight. It helps you not feel as hungry, lowers your cravings for foods, and lowers your feeling that you need to eat. Taking this medicine may make it easier to follow the recommended diet which should help you lose weight.

How much weight can I expect to lose on this medicine?

- **You should lose 1 to 2 pounds a week** if you follow the recommended diet and exercise plan while taking this medicine. In the first 2 weeks, you may lose more weight.
- **After 3 months, weight loss should be about 5% of your starting weight.** For example, if you weigh 250 pounds when you start this medicine, weight loss should be 12 or more pounds in 3 months.
- If you are not losing weight, talk with your healthcare team. The dose may be changed or the medicine may be stopped.

How do I take this medicine?

The starting dose of this medicine is one tablet a day for the first week. Your provider will slowly increase the dose. Do not take with a high-fat meal. Do not cut, chew, or crush tablets. Your provider or pharmacist will talk to you more about how you should take this medicine.

Possible side effects include:

- Feeling tired or weak
- Dizziness
- Problems sleeping if you take the medicine too late in the day
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Dry mouth
- Headache

Less common but serious side effects:

- Signs of an allergic reaction (examples: rash, itching, or trouble breathing)
- Signs of high blood pressure (like a very bad headache or dizziness)
- Signs of liver problems (like dark urine, feeling tired, feeling not hungry, light-colored stools)
- Seeing or hearing things that are not there
- Heartbeat that does not feel normal
- Seizures

All medicines can have side effects, although not everyone will have side effects. Talk with your healthcare team if you notice any side effects that you think may be related to this medicine.

Your healthcare team will monitor the following:

- Weight
- Blood pressure
- Heart beat
- Mood
- **MOVE!** Program or similar program (at least 1 visit per month)

Lorcaserin (Belviq®)

What does this medicine do?

It helps people lose weight along with a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity. It works by decreasing your appetite. Taking this medicine may make it easier to follow the recommended diet which should then result in weight loss.

How much weight can I expect to lose on this medicine?

- **You should lose one-half to 2 pounds a week** if you follow the recommended diet and exercise plan while taking this medicine.
- **After 3 months, weight loss should be 3% of your starting weight.** For example, if you weigh 250 pounds when you start this medicine, you should lose 8 pounds in 3 months.
- If you are not losing weight, talk with your healthcare team. The medicine may need to be stopped or changed.

How do I take this medicine?

If you are prescribed the immediate-release form of medicine, you will take 1 tablet by mouth 2 times daily. If you are prescribed the extended-release form of this medicine, you will take 1 tablet once daily. Do not crush, chew, or divide the extended-release tablets. Both forms of this medicine may be taken without regard to food.

Possible side effects include:

- Feeling tired or weak
- Dizziness
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Low blood sugar (if you have diabetes)
- Headache

Less common but serious side effects:

- Signs of an allergic reaction (examples: rash, itching, or trouble breathing)
- Feeling confused
- New or worse behavior or mood changes like depression or thoughts of killing yourself
- Seeing or hearing things that are not there
- Signs of high blood pressure (like a very bad headache or dizziness)
- Memory problems or loss

All medicines can have side effects, although not everyone will have side effects. Talk with your healthcare team if you notice any side effects that you think may be related to this medicine.

Your healthcare team will monitor the following:

- Weight
- Blood sugar
- Blood pressure
- Heart beat
- Mood
- **MOVE!** Program or similar program (at least 1 visit per month)



Liraglutide (Saxenda®)

What does this medicine do?

This medicine helps people lose weight, along with a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity, by reducing hunger and urge to eat.

How much weight can I expect to lose on this medicine?

- **You should lose 1 to 2 pounds a week** if you follow the recommended diet and exercise plan while taking this medicine.
- **After 4 months, weight loss should be 4% of your starting weight.** For example, if you weigh 250 pounds when you start this medicine, weight loss should be 10 pounds in 4 months.
- If you are not losing weight, talk with your healthcare team. The dose may be changed or the medicine may be stopped.

How do I take this medicine?

This medicine is supplied as a pen to be used for injection. You will inject it just under the skin of the upper leg, stomach area, or upper arm once daily. It may be given without regard to meals or time of day. Your provider or pharmacist will teach you how to do this before sending you home.

Possible side effects include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Low blood sugar
- Fast heartbeat
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Feeling tired
- Stomach ache
- Injection site reaction

Less common but serious side effects:

- Signs of an allergic reaction (examples: rash, itching, or trouble breathing)
- Gallbladder disease
- Mood changes such as feeling sad or wanting to harm yourself
- Kidney disease
- Pancreatitis
- Thyroid tumor

All medicines can have side effects, although not everyone will have side effects. Talk with your healthcare team if you notice any side effects that you think may be related to this medicine.

Your healthcare team will monitor the following:

- Weight
- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- Blood sugar
- Kidney labs
- Mood
- **MOVE!** Program or similar program (at least 1 visit per month)



Orlistat (Xenical®)

What does this medicine do?

This medicine helps people lose weight along with a reduced-calorie diet by blocking some dietary fat from being absorbed with each meal.

How much weight can I expect to lose on this medicine?

- **You should lose one-half to 2 pounds a week** if you follow the recommended diet and exercise plan while taking this medicine. In the first 2 weeks, you may lose more weight.
- **After 3 months, weight loss should be 3% of your starting weight.** For example, if you weigh 250 pounds when you start this medicine, weight loss should be 8 or more pounds in 3 months.
- If you are not losing weight, talk with your healthcare team. The dose may be changed or the medicine may be stopped.

How do I take this medicine?

You will take 1 capsule by mouth with meals—up to 3 meals per day.

This medicine may be taken during or up to 1 hour after the meal. It is recommended to skip a dose if you skip a meal.



Possible side effects include:

- Oily diarrhea, especially if excess fat in the diet
- Headache
- May note orange tint to bowel movements or oil droplets in the toilet
- More frequent bowel movements
- Bowel urgency, less warning of needing to have a bowel movement
- Upset stomach, cramps, gas

Less common but serious side effects:

- Signs of an allergic reaction (examples: rash, itching, or trouble breathing)
- Signs of liver problems (like dark urine, feeling tired, feeling not hungry, light-colored stools)

All medicines can have side effects, although not everyone will have side effects. Talk with your healthcare team if you notice any side effects that you think may be related to this medicine.

Your healthcare team will monitor the following:

- Weight
- **MOVE!** Program or similar program (at least 1 visit per month)
- Other tests may be ordered if you have health problems (example: if you have diabetes, your provider will check your blood sugar)



Visit www.move.va.gov
for information about the **MOVE!**
Weight Management Program for Veterans,
which includes apps, videos, and handouts
designed to support you with your weight
management goals.

Please contact your healthcare team
with any questions or concerns, or talk to
your MOVE! Coordinator or VA Provider
to find out how to get started.

VA



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Veterans Health Administration
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